

THE USE OF SOCIAL GROUP WORK AT THE FORT WAYNE STATE
SCHOOL FOR MENTALLY RETARDED

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DEDICATION

To my mother, Mrs. Josephine Daniels, with
all my love.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance of Study

One of the significant trends during the past fifty years in our mental institutions has been the shift from mass custodial care to one of individual care and treatment. Formerly, the emphasis was, to a large extent, on the physical welfare of the group; that is, that patients be assured of adequate food, clothing, and other physical necessities; that they receive necessary nursing care and attention; and that overcrowding should not be unduly great. Today these matters are still just as essential, but it is now assumed that the patients' physical and emotional needs are of equal importance and must also be met.¹ Today our institutions have many services which are available to the patients or residents.

When institutions changed from the idea of pure custody to that of treatment they originally thought of themselves as replacements for family life. They were convinced of the necessity and the therapeutic value of a happy family relationship and they thought to reproduce it in an institutional setting. The idea of institutions as family units had occurred because we had learned about the importance of close family life and its psychological meaning to the development of every human being.

¹Arthur P. Noyes, "Trends in Mental Hospital Administration," The Psychiatric Hospital. (Washington, 1955), p. 3.

The added knowledge that human beings are also influenced by group association other than the family has been comparatively recent. Even newer and not yet completely clarified is our knowledge of the impact of group association and their negative as well as positive influence.¹

This quotation calls attention to the fact that a substitute for family life is not in itself enough, but that the influence upon individuals of additional group association both negatively and positively must be considered. We then can look more analytically at institutional living and use its unique group living reality in treatment planning. According to Konopka the institution or correctional fields for adults have not tried to imitate the family setting, but have done very little to use the group relations to bring about desirable changes.² At this point the researcher felt that it was important to discuss the provision of treatment in institutions and to note the final goal toward which treatment is directed.

The final purpose of any work with people, be they healthy or sick, young or old, is to help them use as many of their capacities as possible in order that they themselves may be better adjusted and may contribute to society as a whole. Inherent too, in all education in our culture is the purpose which is related to our democratic way of life, that

¹Gisela Konopka, Group Work in the Institution (New York, 1954), p. 13.

²Ibid., p. 14.

is, to have people who can constructively participate in the building of better human relationships.¹

In light of this statement there has been a definite trend to foster this, in part, by the use of the social group work method in various types of settings.² To clarify the use of the social group work method in institutions it seemed important to point out some aspects of this method of social work treatment.

Group work as a method in social work is primarily centered around a "group" and not on the individual alone.³ The social group work process provides the possibility for the development and social adjustment of the individual through group actions. To foster this aim group work has been part of the services offered by many agencies for many years, but its conceptualization as a process of social work is of recent origin.⁴

Social group work is a method by which the group worker enables various types of groups to function in such a way that both group interaction and program activities contribute

¹Gisela Konopka, op. cit., pp. 14-16.

²Grace Coyle, "Social Group Work," Social Work Yearbook (New York, 1951), p. 142.

³Harliegh Trecker, Group Work Foundations and Frontiers (New York, 1955), p. 115.

⁴Grace Coyle, op. cit., p. 470.

to the growth of the individual, and the achievement of desirable social goals. The objectives of the group worker include provision for personal growth according to the individual's capacity and need, the adjustment of the individual to other persons, to groups, and to society, and the motivation of the individual toward the improvement of society; the recognition by the individual of his own rights, limitations and abilities, and differences of others.¹

Social group work is a dynamic process emphasizing the social growth of the individual through voluntary association with the group, and by the use of the group for socially desirable ends. Individuals seek enjoyment which involves more than pleasure. Enjoyment comes when the self is integrated and internally at peace, free of serious envy, hostility, and anxiety. The fullest growth of an individual comes as he uses his expanding powers in association with and for the benefit of others.²

The researcher became interested in the use of the social group work method and its application in a setting for the mentally retarded while associated with the Fort Wayne State School in Fort Wayne, Indiana for a period of six months as a social work student. Little has been written about the experiences in institutions where the social group work method

¹American Association of Group Workers, "Definition of Group Work," Readings In Group Work, ed. by Dorothea Sullivan (New York, 1952), p. 420.

²Helen U. Phillips, Achievement of Responsible Behavior Through Group Work Process (New York, 1950), p. 11.

has been utilized. The researcher felt a study of this nature might be of value to institutions wishing to adopt this method in their treatment programs.

Purpose of the Study

The purposes of this study were to: (1) describe the social group work program at the Fort Wayne State School; (2) to identify the application of the social group work method in this setting.

Method of Procedure

In studying the social group work program at the Fort Wayne State School and the application of social group principles the researcher:

1. Used records with a schedule, and made an analysis by use of the schedule of eighteen group records covering a period from January 17 to June 24, 1957. These were records of one group and were written by a professional group worker and approved by the supervisor of the staff, who was himself a social group worker.
2. Interviewed four departmental directors, the assistant superintendent, and the group work staff by use of an interview guide.
3. Made survey of agency's records pertaining and related to this study and of related material in social work books, periodicals, and pamphlets.

Scope and Limitations

This study was concerned only with the use of the social group work method at the Fort Wayne State School. The study

was limited to the analysis of one group. The research for this study was limited to a six month period, September, 1958 to February, 1959, and by the limited skill of the researcher.

CHAPTER II

SETTING

History and Physical Description

The Fort Wayne State School, is an institution, designed for the treating, training and habilitation of mentally retarded residents from 42 counties of the northern half of the State of Indiana. The institution's main campus is located within the corporate limits of the city of Fort Wayne.

The Fort Wayne State School was created by an act of Legislature in 1879. Originally the institution was to be an adjunct of the Indiana State Soldiers and Sailors Children's Home at Knightstown, Indiana. While the Fort Wayne State School was under construction fire at the Knightstown home made it mandatory that the children be cared for temporarily at the newly build Richmond State Hospital in Richmond, Indiana. In July, 1890 the Fort Wayne State School was dedicated and had as its original population the total of 300 residents. The Fort Wayne State School is operated under the Division of Mental Health which is a state agency with the responsibilities of directing the functioning of 8 psychiatric hospitals, two schools for the mentally retarded, and outpatient clinics.¹

¹Fort Wayne State School, "Annual Report, 1956," (Fort Wayne, Indiana, 1956.) (mimeographed.)

The residents at the Fort Wayne State School are housed in 10 cottages. The institution maintains a 130 bed hospital, a school building, a beauty and barber shop, a canteen, a laundry, a bakery, an administration building, a personnel building and other necessary facilities for the care and treatment of the residents. There also is farm land of 810 acres.

The Fort Wayne State School has a staff of 540 people. There are departments of psychology, social service, business management, clinical, training and administration.

The institution's total enrollment as of February 20, 1959 was 2,009 residents with an additional 125 residents on the waiting list for admission. Of the number of residents in the institution, there are 1,048 male and 961 female. All degrees of mental retardation are accepted by the institution; but not having a nursery setting, limits admission to ages 6 years or above.¹

Classification of Residents

Mental retardation means impaired or incomplete mental development. It is a condition not a disease. Just as individuals are of different physical sizes, so have they different mental abilities.²

¹Interview with R. J. Hartford, (Assistant Superintendent, Fort Wayne State School, Fort Wayne, Indiana, February 23, 1959).

²United States Government Printing Office, The Child Who is Mentally Retarded (Washington, 1956), p. 4.

Mental retardation cannot be cured but it can be improved through training and rehabilitation. Mental health is aided by regularity of schedule, consistency of environment and suiting the task to the abilities of the individual. The most severely retarded can be trained at varying degrees of self-help. The moderately retarded can be trained to adjust and work in protected situations. The mildly retarded can be trained vocationally to adjust in sheltered and at times in competitive setting.¹

The residents at the Fort Wayne State School are classified in three categories of retardation; mild, moderate and severe.

Severe retardation: Those who have approximate I.Q.'s below 20; are unable to protect themselves from ordinary wants; have very limited power of communication; need constant supervision; and are a social burden rather than a social menace. The training is concentrated on social competency skills, including all areas of self help and personal habits, in a well regulated permissive home atmosphere.

Moderate retardation: Those who have approximate I.Q.'s between 20 and 49; are able to do simple tasks under supervision and need social supervision; are able to attend to personal wants with little help; are limited in communication; may learn to read a few words for their protection, e. g. "caution," "danger," "poison," "stop," "go," "fire escape," etc. The training includes areas of personal habits and grooming, religious practices and character developments and recreation; and work activities such as farm or yard chores and housework under supervision.

¹Fort Wayne State School, "Annual Report," op. cit.

Mild retardation: Those who have approximate I.Q.'s between 50 and 69. It is especially difficult to determine the upper limit of mental retardation in terms of I.Q. alone. There is evidence to show that adjustment is related to mental health at least as much as to intelligence as indicated by the I.Q. The mildly retarded are able to reach a school achievement of no higher than grade four in most subjects; may succeed in work as unskilled laborers or possible as semi-skilled laborers; experience a great deal of difficulty exercising proper judgment, adapting to emergency or unusual situations, or working where a time element is involved; support families at a low socio-economic level; may have difficulty in understanding complicated laws and may be led into delinquencies by unscrupulous persons; but with proper training and guidance, are able to become law-abiding citizens.

The training emphasizes all phases of the program for the moderately limited but is extended to include broader application in the academics, pre-vocational, and vocational areas. Participation in religious, social and recreational activities is stressed as an aid in the school adjustment as well as in preparation for future community living.¹

Admission Procedures

Residents may be admitted to Fort Wayne in the following ways: A court commitment from one of the Superior or Circuit Courts in one of the 42 counties of northern Indiana which this institution serves; through a voluntary commitment procedure initiated either by the family or responsible relatives if the resident is under 21 years of age, or by the

¹
Ibid.

resident himself if over 21 years of age.¹

Before an individual is admitted to the institution he and his parents receive preadmission services which result in assessing needs of the applicant through a social study, psychological examination, clinical evaluation, psychiatric interviews, and, when indicated, other examinations e. g. speech, and hearing tests etcetera. These services are also designed to acquaint the applicant and family with the staff, the program, and the facilities of the school. From pre-admission services come the recommendation for admission to the school, or a referral to appropriate community resources.²

For many years the Fort Wayne State School followed the standard admitting procedure practiced by most institutions for the mentally retarded. There were rigid regulations, and a period of quarantine in the hospital. Newly admitted residents were dressed in hospital garb and lost their identity in the matter of routines and activities geared to the sick. Parents were not permitted to visit during the first twenty-one days.

Today the new admissions to the Fort Wayne State School are planned in accordance with the philosophy of the new admission unit. A group of four or five residents are admitted periodically on the same day but at different hours. Each

¹Interview with J. Henry, (Director of Social Services, Fort Wayne State School, Fort Wayne, Indiana, February 25, 1959).

²Fort Wayne State School, "Annual Report," op. cit.

such group is homogenous to the extent that the members are of the same sex, chronological age group, and mental level. The resident to be admitted and his family are met by a social worker who escorts them to the new admission unit. Here they are introduced to the nurse and to the attendants who staff the unit. The parents are permitted to remain with the child several hours if they wish. During this time they may inform the unit attendants about the child's peculiar habits of sleeping, eating, language, toilet, etcetera. The parents receive information concerning visiting hours, mail, gifts, etcetera; and are advised to come back as often as they like during the regular visiting hours.¹

Newly admitted residents remain in the new admission unit for a period of two weeks. Near the end of that time they appear before the diagnostic and planning committee. This committee is composed of a Psychologist, Social Case Worker, Social Group Worker, Medical Doctor, Teacher, Speech and Hearing Therapist, Vocational Counselor and Recreation Worker. All material gathered pertaining to the resident is brought together and a diagnosis is made according to the present American Association for Mental Deficiency's, Blue Book. At

¹Bernard Dolnick, "Fort Wayne State School Has Vital Program For New Admissions," (Fort Wayne, Indiana, January 20, 1959), p. 1. (mimeographed).

this committee meeting a plan is made for the resident according to his needs and facilities available; then he is assigned to a cottage.¹

Once a plan is made for the resident, he is provided with a daily program by the scheduling committee. This committee is composed of representatives from the different disciplines who meet once a week for the purpose of scheduling residents to the various activities.

After the resident has been in the school for a period of time he appears before the progress review committee. This committee is also made up of representatives from the different disciplines. Its purpose is to review the progress of the resident at different levels of training and make recommendations. If it is determined that the resident has made sufficient progress he is then referred to the release planning committee.²

The release planning committee is structured in the same manner as the above mentioned committees. Its interest is directed toward the referred resident, his needs and problems of adjustment outside of the institution.

¹Interview with Dr. Meyer, (Director of Clinical Services, Fort Wayne State School, Fort Wayne, Indiana, February 19, 1959).

²Interview with Dr. I. C. Hamlett, (Director of Psychological Services, Fort Wayne State School, Fort Wayne, Indiana, February 24, 1959).

Many residents remain in the institution for the course of their lives but many are given leaves of absence, convalescent leaves, and are eventually discharged to their families, guardians, or directly to the community.

Changing Philosophy

The Fort Wayne State School presented a typical picture of most institutions prior to the renaissance of interest throughout the United States in providing proper and adequate care and treatment facilities for mentally ill and mentally retarded patients. It wasn't until April of 1956, that it could be said that the Fort Wayne State School began moving away from the custodial care of residents into a treatment designed program for training and habilitation. It was at this time that an administrator was appointed who had his training in the Social Sciences and in Public Administration.¹

The Fort Wayne State School is allying itself with the modern approaches to the treatment and habilitation of mentally retarded persons by developing a climatic approach in institutional living. Basic premise of retardation is its being incurable. However, utilization of sound social scientific knowledge as to the development of personalities and a socialability program has centered its efforts not only in providing a better physical plant as well as better physical care of the residents, but also has concerned itself

¹Interview with J. Henry, (Director of Social Services, Fort Wayne State School, Fort Wayne, Indiana, February 25, 1959).

with their emotional and social development. Therefore the entire program of the institution is directed toward providing for the residents a maximum life experience within the limitation of the institutional setting.¹

Services Rendered

The residents' treatment takes many forms and many services are offered. These services include complete medical service, recreation, training, vocation rehabilitation, cottage life, psychology and social service. Because this study was concerned only with the group work program which is an integral part of the social service department, the researcher felt it necessary to describe the development of this department.

The Social Service part of the total operation of the institution is a fairly recent origin. It is noteworthy that prior to 1955 the administration was not concerned with establishing a Social Service Department. The clinical psychologist handled this phase of institutional operation as part of her employment. In late 1955 or early 1956 the first Social Worker was employed full time with two part time assistants. From this meager beginning the staff, at the time of this study, consisted of an executive, three trained case workers, one case aide, one case work supervisor, one group work supervisor, two fully trained group workers and

¹Ibid.

a student affiliation with the Atlanta University School of Social Work. There were also two full time secretarial workers and one part time secretarial worker available.¹

Social group work as a part of social service was initiated in January, 1957 with the employment of one group worker. In July of 1957 group work was moved from Social Service, and was placed under cottage life, with a case worker as director. The cottage life section administered the operation of the 10 cottages in which the residents resided. The social group workers responsibilities were designed to work with the development of the therapeutic milieu within the living environment of the residents. Social Development was created to include cottage life and Social case work sections.

In October, 1958 Social Development dissolved and social group work was again placed under the auspices of the Social Service Department. Here its primary responsibility was to work with small treatment groups toward better interpersonal relationships.

With a description of the agency and mental deficiency, the researcher then gave consideration to the study of the group work program as it was in operation at the Fort Wayne State School.

¹Ibid.

CHAPTER III

THE GROUP WORK PROGRAM

Introduction

The American Association for Mental Deficiency postulates that one of the conditions which characterizes mental retardation is inadequate social adjustment. The present-day approach to program needs for the mentally retarded is based upon the premise that mental retardation is a complex aggregate of symptoms rather than a static condition and it is accountable in many cases to improvement through medical and psychiatric treatment, education, special speech training, family casework, psychiatric social work and group work.¹

In light of the above paragraph it might be said that the history of the Fort Wayne State School has been marked by periods of progress and by periods of reaction to change. The School is experiencing phenomenal growth, in terms of changing philosophy, program, and staff. The Fort Wayne State School has long felt the need for a dynamic group approach to the problems of its residents, and the strengthening of the recreation, education, casework and other programs made this need increasingly clear.²

¹R. J. Hartford and R. V. Smith, "A Social Group Work Program In An Institution for the Mentally Retarded," American Journal of Mental Deficiency, (March, 1959), p. 897.

²Ibid.

The most direct application of social group work method at the Fort Wayne State School has been in connection to the organization and leadership of club groups by social group workers and second year graduate students in social group work placed at this institution for field work training

The Study Group

The group analyzed for this study was a club group called the "Emperor's Club." The "Emperor's" were a natural group of (30) adolescent boys and young men who shared a dormitory with thirty (30) other similar age residents. One-third of the boys could have been considered potential candidates for placement in their own homes or in the community after their training had been completed. Their intelligence quotients ranged from 45 - 70 and their chronological ages were from 16 to 28. The group members varied considerably in their social experiences, emotional maturity, and mental health. All had acted out hostility toward the school and the adults connected with it. Miss S. chose this group because of the behavior of its members in the dormitory where they resided and because of their frankly delinquent acts such as petty stealing, poor relations with their peer groups, frequent runaways from the school, and their open resistance to authority.

In identifying the application of the social group work method as used at the Fort Wayne State School the following items served as a basis for analyzing the group: group formation, which included the agency's purpose and

group's purposes; group structure and controls; the decision making process; group atmosphere; group symbols and standards; and program planning. The worker's role was pointed out in relation to these items.

Group Formation

People seek group relations because some of their needs can be met better as group members than in any other way; therefore every agency and worker must deal with the questions of how to form groups to provide optimum growth opportunities for the group members. It is not easy to always discover what it is that people actually want from group experiences because they themselves may not understand exactly what it is they are seeking from such experiences. Social group work can contribute to the provision of sound group experiences and when this method is used attention must be given to the group formation process. In the area of group formation, the group worker must be cognizant of such items as knowledge of types of groups, the individuals who are to comprise the group, and knowledge of group and individual behavior.

Some groups are formed by the members who have established a bond among each other and want to strengthen it by organization, which may be formal or informal. Other groups are formed by agencies because the members are attracted to the proposed program content which the group offers.

The first is the natural group, the latter is the formed group. The natural group is usually organized outside

the agency, or as in the study group without the assistance of the agency.

The "Emperors" are a natural group of young men between the ages of 13 and 23. There are also (30) boys in this group; 23 of these were considered problems in the dormitory where they reside, namely Carroll Cottage. During the early part of January, this problem group broke into the basement of Carroll Cottage. (Emperors 1/17/57).

This excerpt taken from the summary of the Emperors' club showed that this group was seen by the agency as a natural group. The natural group, even before formal organization, has achieved to some degree the characteristics of a group. One in particular is a group bond. This bond may be an interest in certain activity; it may be the desire to learn something new and different; it may be the personal need to be with one another. It may be the desire to do something about a social problem or the desire to explore some unknown area of human experience. The quality of interpersonal relationships among group members constitutes the bond that unites the group.¹

R. said, "Well Miss S, if one of the Emperor boys can't go, then none of the Emperor fellows are going." Yea," the rest of the group replied. (Emperors 2/4/57)

As seen here from the Emperors' record this group had developed such a bond among its members.

¹Harliegh B. Trecker, Social Group Work (New York, 1948), p. 88.

The purpose of agencies in providing group services may seem to be different from the purposes expressed by the members of the group. Whenever group work services are offered through agencies whose primary service is not group work such as different institutions, the purpose of that particular agency or institution provides the direction for the more specific departmental goals.¹

This group was selected for the use of the group work method because of the behavior of its members in the dormitory where they reside and because of their frankly delinquent sets such as petty stealing, poor relations with their peer groups, their open resistance to authority, and frequent run-aways from the school. (Emperors 1/17/57)

This excerpt showed that the agency's concern was around the behavior problem of the group but this did not seem to be the group's purpose as was indicated by the members.

Members join groups for many reasons, some may use the group for an avenue of expression, some for a means of gaining status and others to satisfy a need to belong. Agencies and workers must be aware of what people are seeking from group experiences and help them get it. Groups in institutions may have even greater significance to the

¹Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, Social Group Work Practice (Boston, 1955), pp. 66-67.

residents than some of those offered as a community service. Here groups are substituted for home and community life and provide the individuals with opportunity to satisfy the need for something to which they can belong. The meaning the group experience has for the individual and what he can potentially get is a concern of the worker. The group's purpose then becomes a controlling force in the group. Individuals oftentimes may not understand themselves what it is they are seeking from groups, but there is always something. Sometimes the reasons expressed verbally are at variance with the real reason which they do not know or cannot verbalize.

At the meetings, the boys had several questions that they raised. R. B. was the spokesman for the group at this time. He stated very proudly that, "We are the problem group and we want to do all the things that the Problem Treatment Unit did before. We want to sleep in the basement, have a T. V. down there, read in bed, and everything." This statement caused the rest of the fellows to shout, "yeah," that's what we want." I said, "Well, I don't know, but I'll certainly find out if we can do these things, but you don't want to be called a problem do you? Do you know what a problem is?", I said smiling. No one said anything except that the other P. T. Unit could do what they want. I said, "I will not promise you that you can do whatever you want, but we can see about doing some of the activities or things that everyone in the group agrees to do. . . On Friday, January 18, 1957, R. B. came to my office and said, "Miss S, we don't want to be called "The Emperors", and he showed me a card with the Emperors name printed on it. I asked R. B. if the other boys found out what a problem is. He shook his head solemnly and said "yes, but we don't want to be called that." (Emperors 1/17/57.)

This group seemed to be proud of being the problem group because they were recognized by their peers and this gave them status which seems to be a universal need for all individuals. However, the members seemed to have wanted recognition and status through social acceptable means.

Many factors come from satisfying group experiences. Individuals need opportunities to participate in worthwhile collective enterprises in which they can take responsibility and feel that they have a part in achieving a goal outside themselves. The group is a means through which individuals can realize this wish.¹

After this, I asked the boys what are some of the things that they wanted to do. This statement caused a lot of group involvement. Activities they wanted to engage in were trips to the Y. M. C. A. for swimming and basketball games (have the "Y" team to come to the state school to play them) go to the Coliseum to watch the basketball games, soapbox derbies, ice hockey, rodeo shows, and to see the circus. . . Several others stated that they wanted to go dating and have a party wherein they can invite girls. (Emperors 1/22/57)

The group at this point seemed to be expressing their interests in affairs outside of themselves which were socially accepted. The group in asking about a party was seeking for relationships outside the realm of their group, namely with girls.

¹Harliegh Trecker, op. cit., p. 81.

Individuals need means for self-expression and situations in which they can be socially creative. They need a setting where they may master some of the skills of democratic living. Groups provide such opportunities. Status needs which seem universal for all, must be met through group association.¹

B. said, "what are we suppose to do for someone else?" and G. said, "what are we going to do for ourselves." I said that is right and then what they wanted to do for themselves. The first activity the group decided to do was to have a party. The project the group decided upon was entertaining the children in the hospital and making a scrapbook for them.
(Emperors 1/28/57)

The group in satisfying its need for self expression used the group situation to be creative. The projects selected by the group could satisfy its need for status and give it an opportunity to utilize the democratic process of living.

Wilson and Ryland state that "It is significant that individuals form themselves into groups not only because of common positive interests but because of common enemies."² When we seek to find out what individuals want and need from group experiences, we discover that first and foremost they want to belong in a psychological sense.³ The organized group

¹Ibid.

²Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 41.

³Harliegh Trecker, op. cit., p. 167.

sometimes take the place of, or supplements, the family group as the testing ground of values and norms. The need is often for self expression, and one of the ties that unites a group is the protection which it offers the members for the expression of hostile feelings. This was seen clearly in the Emperors' meeting on February 20, 1957. The group together felt free to discuss its hostile feeling around certain attendants at the institution.

. . .said, "everything is all right now, Miss S, we have it all settled." L. said "do you really have it all settled? I think the best way to solve any of our problems is to talk about them and find out what we can do about them." C. said, "It's all right now, Miss S, we apologized." I said, "You apologized? Do you really think that you were wrong?" said "no but to keep peace we apologized." I wasn't even in on it and they told me to apologize." I said, "who told you to apologize and for what?" R. said, "Oh, Miss N, she told us to go apologize and make everything all right and so we did that. I said, "Let's really look into the matter and find out what happened." J. said, "Well Miss S, I was not even bothering that man. He claimed that I hit him. I did not hit him. He shocked me and hit me and then after that, I hit him back." I said, "let's begin here. Let's find out who are the attendants whom you fellows don't seem to get along with." The boys mentioned Mr. W., Mr. L. and the new attendants. I said, "well what is it that you don't like about these men?" The group stated that Mr. S. always ran and told what the boys are doing instead of just telling the boys right there. I asked them to tell me what they meant by that. "Oh, he is a tell tale," R. said, "well, I said, "what do you mean by a tattle tale?" R. said, "well now he caught E. smoking. Instead of him telling E. don't smoke, you aren't

suppose to smoke here, he runs and tells Mr. B. or he will run and tell one of the other attendants and then one of the other attendants will try to get bossy and make the guy stop." What you are saying in other words is this: the attendant or whoever is on duty should tell the boys themselves rather than running to the supervisor and telling them what happen. The boys would appreciate that more." "Yes, yes, that is what we mean." the fellows said. . .then they told her on us. If they catch us, we tell them what we are doing even if it is wrong," R. said. . .

I asked the boys how would they like to form a council, with a president and vice president of the Emperor Club meeting with the supervisor and some of the attendants, together with them we could talk about these problems and maybe some of them could be rid of through discovering them with the attendants." I am sure the attendants have problems that they would like to discuss about some of the time that you boys do." All of them thought this was a good idea and that they would like to have such a group formed. (Emperors 2/20/57)

As the group work group develops there will emerge some agreed-upon way of selecting and admitting members to the groups, so that social control can develop and the group can take responsibility for its own conduct. Groups must have limits that are known to the members.¹

Thus two new members who have been asking to join the club were considered. We talked about these two boys and I asked the other fellows how did they really feel about it. Did they think that these two prospectives D. and C. would make good club members. All of

¹Ibid., p. 142.

the boys felt they would. At the next meeting which was held May 20, the two boys were brought in to observe club conditions and a regular club meeting, to decide for themselves whether they wanted to really become members or not. . . . I told them that perhaps at the next meeting, which would give them a weeks time, they could decide whether they still wanted to become members. At the meeting on May 27, the boys came back and we had a secret ballot meeting, deciding whether or not these fellows could become members or not of the Emperor Club. The entire group voted unanimously for the two boys. (Emperors 5/18/57)

As the Emperors developed as a group, they became more critical of their prospective members and set up a system by which new members came into the group.

The process in a group will go on with or without the worker. By process I'm referring here to the movement of the group in terms of development from one stage to another. However, the process is greatly enhanced with a worker. As seen in the group formation process the worker played an important role in first helping the members to find out what they wanted from the group experiences. This was indicated in the excerpt of the Emperors' 1/17/57. From this excerpt the worker was interested in discovering the group's conception of its purposes or objectives; the goals of the group as defined by the group itself is of utmost importance. The worker enhanced the process again in recognizing the fact that it was necessary for the group to express themselves and their feelings negative as well as positive, and not

consider their feelings as directed toward him personally. An example of this was shown in the Emperor's meeting on 2/20/57. The worker's role was again shown, in helping the members develop their admission process 5/18/57.

Group Structure

The process of group formation takes place only when there is sufficient acceptance among the members to set up an "official" or "unofficial" structure to maintain the program content. As described the members organized formally and set up certain objectives for the group. The next step in the process was to set up some type of structure through which these objectives could be accomplished. "Structure" as originally and ordinarily used, implies something built or finished; this meaning is far from accurate, however, when the term is used in the sense of group relationships and a somewhat different meaning must be read into it. "Structure", according to Wilson and Ryland,¹ is a system of formal or informal grouping by which the social behavior of individuals is regulated.¹

. . . One important factor is emerging, and that is the element of self government. This element was brought about because of the running away of two club members. The boys decided that something should be done about the fellows bringing disgrace upon the name of the club, because as one boy stated "The first thing someone will say is, that boy's a member of the Emperor's club, and the Emperor club means something."

¹Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 51.

"Thus they decided to have a demerit system, wherein if a club member is caught stealing he received two points, cursing an attendant two points, running away, five points, pink slips for hanging around girls' dormitories two points, not reporting to work three points etc. When a fellow received nine points he is then put on probation. He cannot attend club meetings for one month. When he received fifteen points his name is automatically dropped from the club. . The group decided to have a jury and trial, because they felt that sometimes the boys, although they may receive a pink slip, it might not be justified. . . They will hear the cases and from there will decide whether the person is guilty or not guilty. It is also interesting to note that the group stated that they would like to go to the court house and see a jury act. Since this time the same two boys ran away again and the club decided that they would be automatically dropped from the club. I asked if L. and M. should be placed on probation. We discussed this both pro and con and finally a vote was taken. Out of the 27 boys present 23 felt that they should be dropped and four felt that they should be put on probation. (Emperors 4/22/57)

The group had set up their structure through which their objectives might be reached and were now enforcing them by means of controls over their members. The structure of the group is the evidence of the meaningful relationships within the group. The concept of relationship refers to the bond of feeling that exists between the worker and the group and among the group members. As was seen earlier this group had established a bond of feeling among its members before this formal organization. This could be seen during the first meeting of the Emperors' in the way they related to each other and the calling of nicknames among the members.

"Since this is our first meeting, we have to find out your names, what you want to do, and what you are going to call your club." At this announcement, a resounding reply of "The Emperors" came forth. I said, "Fine, but let's sit down first and we'll begin finding out your names and ages. Then we'll decide on the name of the club." The boys did this in a well disciplined manner; some of them would kid each other and give the nicknames of some of the fellows. (Emperors 1/22/57)

The relationship between the worker and the group takes time to develop and this seemed to have been a conscious concern of the worker with the Emperors'.

When we had assembled, I congratulated the boys on their meeting on February 28,. R. said, "Miss S. we are not dumb, we know what we are doing." I smiled and said, "I believe that and I have always felt that." Everyone laughed. (Emperor 3/4/57)

The Decision-Making Process

The decision-making process is the control core of the social group work method. It is important that the members have the opportunity and responsibilities of the management of their own corporate affairs. In the decision-making process the members get a chance to voice their opinions on items and to bring up ideas of their own. The members learn to accept others' ideas and practice the procedure of the democratic process of voting. When members have a voice in making decisions of the group, they become involved in a most significant way. When members don't have such involvement the group has less meaning and little influence over their behavior.¹

¹Ibid., p. 72.

The members of the Emperors' seemed to have had such involvement in the election of their officers as was indicated in the group's record of 1/28/57.

"How many officers or names do you want to have for each office?" "At least six," R. said. I replied any other suggestions?" "No, six is all right," several others answered. (Emperors 1/28/57)

The group members should manage their own affairs with the help of the social group worker, who helps them in making and carrying out decisions. The worker should support the elected officers and encourage shy or withdrawn members to take part in the discussion.

At the meeting, I let R. assume his role of president. He was rather slow but fearless. I supported him by saying, "Mr. President, do you think we should talk about dues, etc." He replies, "Yes, what do you guys think?" Then the discussion could center around whatever the group might be discussing at that time. (Emperors 2/10/57)

At this meeting the worker played an important part in helping the elected officer carry out his responsibility by helping him form his meeting. The worker should also help the officers or the group to handle the too aggressive, too vocal or too active members without completely denying them the opportunity which the group provides for the expression of their hostile feelings.

R. said, "Well Miss S. If one of the Emperor boys can't go, then none of the Emperor fellows are going." "Yeah," the rest of the group replied. "We are not going if one of the other fellows cannot go." I said, "I think that is a fine feeling to have toward your fellow

club men, but I don't think the fellows that perhaps would not be going would want the rest of you fellows not to enjoy yourselves." (Emperors 2/4/57)

In this excerpt the worker was helping the group with the aggressive member and yet not taking the feeling from the group. The worker should clarify issues when needed, give information when necessary and should respect the decision of the group even if it is contrary to his own interest or desires.

I had informed the boys previously about the meeting and asked them if they would like to act as a demonstration group. I explained to them just what it was . . . Of course, it was up to them whether they wanted to be used. It was a unanimous agreement that they would like to be observed as a club group to show our guest just what we do here at the Fort Wayne State School. (Emperors 2/28/57)

Here the worker wanted to use this group for a demonstration group but she did not force her desires on the group; instead she explained it to them and let them decide whether they wanted to do this or not. Through the decision-making process the group members learn to accept the principal of majority decision and to use the method by which the decision may be changed within the structure of the group's operation. In the next excerpt the group was given the opportunity to experience voting.

At the meeting on May 27, the boys came back and we had a secret ballot meeting, deciding whether or not these fellows would become members of the Emperor's Club. The entire group voted unanimously for these two boys. (Emperors 5/27/57)

Group Atmosphere

In a group work situation, where several members are together there is a complexity of feelings. The interaction of each member to the other and to the worker produces a group feeling. Group feeling is a somewhat intangible quality but it is clearly identifiable to one who is free to sense it. It is the love, the spirit, the atmosphere, that permeates a group. It may be fear, suspicion, excitement, hostility, anticipation or determination. In a broader sense it is the predominant feeling of a group.¹

The boys were pretty disturbed about being sent out to the farm. Various reasons were discussed as to why C. was sent to the farm. The majority of the boys felt that the reason given was unfair because they stated they saw C. in bed at 2:00 in the morning and he was not the boy who threw the stones. (Emperors 6/24/57)

The predominant feeling of the group at this meeting was hostility. The group was disturbed about one of its members being sent to the farm for something they didn't feel was right. The cause of this feeling could be seen at this meeting but it is not always possible to know what causes the group's predominant feeling of the day; the distinct quality of the mood of any particular moment often cannot be explained. It may be due to the feelings and

¹Helen Phillips, Essentials of Social Group Work Skills (New York, 1957), p. 110.

resulting behavior of individuals especially those who have high group status; or to events and experiences between meetings as seen in the excerpt above; or it may be due to the worker's and agency's expectation of the group which calls forth an immediate feeling response. It is the worker's responsibility to help the group understand and acknowledge their feelings and take responsibility for them, as a means of enabling them to move toward the goal of increasing self-responsibility.¹

The boys arrived in good spirits but a little frightened, I could sense especially R. I told R. that I knew how he felt but to cheer up. After you get started you will feel all right. I told him I was a little nervous myself. We both laughed and I said to dance for a while and after that would he check around and see how the fellows were doing with the scrapbooks. (Emperors 2/28/57)

The worker recognized the predominant feeling of the group at this meeting and began helping them acknowledge and work through them. This feeling seemed to have resulted from the highest status member of the group on to the other members. Therefore the worker started working with R.

Group Symbols and Standards

Participation in the decision-making process of organized groups means that each member develops values and norms characteristic of the group. The group as a whole takes the responsibility for the carrying out of these values through

¹Ibid., pp. 110-112.

the behavior required for membership. Many groups don't have written or stated qualifications, but the member knows that he belongs and what makes him eligible; he is aware that membership requires of him certain kinds of attitudes, conduct and responses to situations which the group as a whole feels important.¹

The boys decided that they felt something should be done about fellows bringing disgrace upon the name of the club, because as one boy stated, the first thing someone will say is, that boy's a member of the Emperor Club and the Emperor Club means something."
(Emperors 4/18)

The group had set up certain unwritten standards for its members concerning their behavior and here they took action on these members.

As the group develops the members frequently adopt various symbols of distinction, such as a uniform, password, club name, insignia and other methods of setting themselves apart as a group entity.² This was shown in the early stages of this group when the members decided to name their group the Emperors' because this meant the "best," "the highest" to the members.

From now on our club will be called, The Emperors! Now usually a name stands for something. What does an Emperor mean?

¹ Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 41.

² Grace Coyle, Social Process in Organized Groups (New York, 1930), p. 62.

"The big shots, the best, the highest,"
were the replies given. (Emperors 1/22/57)

Program Planning

According to Trecker, program in social group work means anything and everything that groups do to satisfy their interests.¹ The discovery of interests and needs is the concern of the worker early in his work with his group. In the next record excerpt the worker sought to find out just what it was in which the group was interested.

. . .I asked the boys what are some of the things that they wanted to do...Activities they wanted to engage in were trips to the Y. M. C. A. for swimming and basketball games (Have the "Y" team to come to the state school to play them), go to the coliseum to watch the basketball games, soapbox derbies, ice hockey, rodeo shows, and to see the circus. . . Several others stated that they wanted to go dating and have a party wherein they can invite girls. (Emperors 1/22/57)

Group members relate to each other around a common purpose or interest, finding in a co-operative way the channel for initiating and strengthening relations with each other. This is one of the many purposes for the use of recreational activities in group work method.²

The boys entered the club room shouting and filled with glee. They went to the usual activities of either listening to

¹Harliegh Trecker, op. cit., p. 142.

²Helen Phillips, op. cit., p. 146.

the recording machine, working on their scrapbooks, playing with the bowling alley or standing around talking. Club meeting began fifteen minutes after the free period. (Emperors 3/4/57)

Here the use of recreational activities helped the group release some of its excess energy before its meeting began.

All members will not enjoy every area of program to the same degree. There are peculiar qualities in each activity that appeal to certain members. Members tend to reveal their personality patterns through ways in which they engage in activities. The members through activity have a chance to express friendliness and affection as well as indifference or open hostility toward others. The most important principle in program is that the members do their own planning. It is never true that groups, "just aren't interested in anything," but it is true that some groups are rather slow to express themselves. Therefore, the worker often suggests activity programs to groups and points out interesting possibilities. In so doing he is trying to free the group to respond and "open up," to let him know what they want and can do.¹ Here the group decided on their first two projects and in the process of planning for them the members had a chance to express themselves and hear others. The worker helped the members with their suggestions for this project

¹Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, op. cit., p. 41.

by clarifying certain matters for them.

The first activity the group decided to do was to have a party. The project the group decided upon was entertaining the children in the hospital and making a scrapbook for them... (1/28/57)

Since the first thing on S's agenda after reading the minutes pertained to the party, we discussed the party. I asked the group about a theme for their party, wherein they could set their decorations and favors and invitations around it. I had to explain to them what a theme was. After explaining what a theme meant, I mentioned some types of parties that they could give, such as a hobo party, Elvis Presley parties (a loud "yeh" went out when I mentioned Elvis Presley's name) blue jean party (no we have to get dressed for our party was the reply from some of the fellows). J. suggested a J. R. party. R. suggested an Emperor party. R. suggest the idea and said they could have crowns and decorations. Paper hanging around. I said that sounds fine. "Do you think a committee should be selected to further look into the idea of a theme and perhaps ideas for refreshments and then they could bring it back to the group and we could decide on whether we wanted it or not." This the group agreed to do. Persons serving on that committee were O., O., G., and P.

Knowledge of the potentialities of program media makes it possible for the group worker to understand the needs that are expressed and to help the members meet these needs, through program of the group if it is possible to do so. The worker must be skilled in recognizing extremes of behavior which indicate the need for more personalized assistance and be able to help the members obtain this service.¹

¹Ibid.

At the meeting the boys started working on the scrapbook, making further plans for the party and discussions of problems. After the session, I began teaching the boys how to dance. At first they were bashful, so I asked T. to dance with me. He smiled and started dancing. While we were dancing I began explaining what a one step was. . . "A one step will help you in rhythm and balance. Thus it affords you also the opportunity to talk to your partner while you are dancing." They enjoyed dancing tremendously and began dancing with each other, especially when they learned that maybe at their party they would be dancing with girls. (Emperors 2/4/57)

The worker seemed to have recognized the need here for a means by which the members could better move into heterosexual relationships. The group situation was used by the worker in helping with the program activity of dancing.

Discussions that come from program planning and activities themselves hold important values for the members. Participation in group activity can help the members to express their real feelings around different situations. The worker in assisting the members in the development of program should be concerned that the program meet the needs, assures interests and extend horizons for the members.

At 11:15, I asked the boys if we should start our business meeting because our time was running short. This the group agreed to do. The group's party on March 30 was the first thing on the agenda that the group discussed. A committee composed of R., E., S., B., and J. met on Friday, 2-15-57 to discuss party plans. Each boy on the committee told a little about what our plans for the party were. The group agreed to the plans and several suggestions were offered pertaining to

a welcome committee or hosts to meet the girls when they come in and souvenir I D cards for the Emperors. There are the plans that were made: Concerning the decorations all colored crepe paper streamers would be used. Emperor crowns would be made and placed on the wall, along with the name of the Emperor club cut of varicolored construction paper. Each girl would receive a crown with this written on it, "Hello, My name is ____." Refreshments decided on were punch, cookies, ice cream and cup-cakes. Several of the boys did not know what punch was and I explained to them what it was. For the program, they would have records, a spot dance, they would guess the number of peanuts that were in a jar, ducking for the apples and a balloon dance. For those who did not want to dance, bingo, ping pong, checkers and cards would be set up for them to play. During the intermission or the time when the group would be eating, E. suggested playing hillbilly tunes. The group accepted it with this reservation, if the girls did not like it then they would put on some other kind of records. R. raised the point about learning how to do the mambo or cha cha. All the boys wanted to learn this so at the next meeting we decided to bring records for this. Party hats might be made by the group as they came into the party. The party would begin about 6:45 or 7:00 and end at 8:45. (Emperors 2/18/57)

In this excerpt it was shown how the members participated in the discussion around their program activity. The members planned for their party and other things with the help of the worker who took little part in the session.

Every person is concerned about relationships with others but often does not know how to establish them. Many program activities supply circumstances for members to come

together and when a group develops a joint project or gives a successful party the result is a high group morale.

The boys entered the meeting laughing and talking about their party Saturday, March 23, the boys felt that it was a very nice party. They wondered if they could have another party . . . The other thing that the boys discussed was a proposed variety show.
(Emperors 3/25/57)

This program activity seemed to have met the needs of the group members for they appeared very pleased after the party. It seemed to have strengthened the bond of the group and extended their interest to the point where they were interested in their group sponsoring a different type program that would include members outside of their particular group.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study was undertaken to describe the social group work program at the Fort Wayne State School and to identify the application of the social group work method in that setting. The Fort Wayne State School for the Mentally Retarded which is located in Fort Wayne, Indiana made available the material needed by the researcher.

With the changing philosophy of the Fort Wayne State School to the new approach in treatment, the resident is considered a whole individual and not an aggregation of parts. The resident's emotional health is considered just as important as the custodial care and many services are provided for them including the social group work method.

The group work program started at the Fort Wayne State School in 1957. The administration felt the need for the utilization of the group work method with a delinquent group within the institution.

From the study the following conclusions were drawn:

1. The group studied was found to be a natural group of young men who had established a bond among themselves and wanted to strengthen it by formal and/or informal organization.

This group used their bond to rebel against the

authority of the institution by acts of "petty stealing," frequent runaways from school," and "open resistance to authority."

2. The group had strong dependency needs and seemed to have relied on its indigenous leader for direction in the beginning stages of its formal organization. This dependency need also seemed to have caused the members to develop strong ties to the group worker.
3. As the group developed, the members seemed to have developed a sense of individual responsibility in relation to the group as a whole, and the members began to accept some of the limitations of the institution which had earlier caused them conflict.
4. The worker took a very active part in the decision-making process to encourage some of the shy and withdrawn members to take a part.
5. The members of the group seemed to have a strong need to be accepted by authority of the worker as a representative of the agency. This need seemed to stimulate the development of an atmosphere of friendliness and cooperativeness.

6. Because of the members' limited ability to carry over ideas and suggestions from one meeting to another and because of their limited social experiences and knowledge, the group worker gave more "direct leadership" to the group in program planning than might have been necessary in other groups of their age.

Finally, the writer concluded that the social group work method as indicated in the analysis of the study group was in keeping with the principles and practices as described in the social group work literature, that the group work method can be used in institutions for the mentally retarded and the group work program at the Fort Wayne State School played a vital part in the treatment process of the residents.

APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE FOR GROUP ANALYSIS

I. GROUP FORMATION

1. How, by whom, and for what reason were the groups started?
A. Explain
2. What were the group's expressed and implied purpose?
A. Explain
3. What needs seem to have been met in the groups?
A. Explain
4. How are new members admitted?
A. Explain
5. What was the role of the worker in the formation process?
A. Explain

II. GROUP CONTROLS

1. Does the group have a formal system for controls?
A. Explain
2. What kinds of behavior does the group control?
A. Explain
3. What methods does it use for control? - (punishment? rewards?)
A. Explain
4. What was the role of the worker in the development of group controls?
A. Explain

III. INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF THE GROUPS

1. What is the pattern of relationship among the members?

A. Member to member?

B. Member to worker?

IV. DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

1. How are decisions usually reached in the group? (formal or informal process)

A. Majority rule.

B. Compromise

C. Integration

2. What is the role of the indigenous leader in the decision-making process?

A. Explain

V. GROUP ATMOSPHERE

1. What is the general atmosphere of the group?

A. Hostility

B. Friendliness

C. Cooperative

D. Apathy

VI. GROUP SYMBOLS

1. Do the members use any type symbol or ritual to express their attachment to the group?

A. Explain

VII. GROUP STANDARDS

1. Do the groups have certain accepted standards?

A. Dress

B. Behavior

VIII. PROGRAM PLANNING

1. How was program used in the group?
A. Explain
2. How was program initiated in the group?
A. Explain
3. To what extent does the program meet the needs of the group?
A. Explain
4. What was the role of the worker?
A. Explain

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. What is the agency's purpose in providing group services?
2. What is the agency's objective for the individuals in the group?
3. What are the purposes of the following committees:
 - a. pre-application and evaluation
 - b. pre-admission
 - c. diagnostic and planning
 - d. progress and review
 - e. scheduling
 - f. release planning
4. What were the purposes of groups?
5. What were the group's goals?
6. What were the bases of formation?
 - a. are the ages of members considered
 - b. are the sex differences considered
 - c. how were the sizes of groups determined
 - d. are intellectual differences and levels of retardation considered
7. What are the functions of the social group worker on the different committees?

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